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THE JACG NEWSLETTER

THE JERSEY ATARI COMPUTER GROUP

VOLUME 9 NUMBER 5 BBS : 201-298-0161 JULY 1989

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

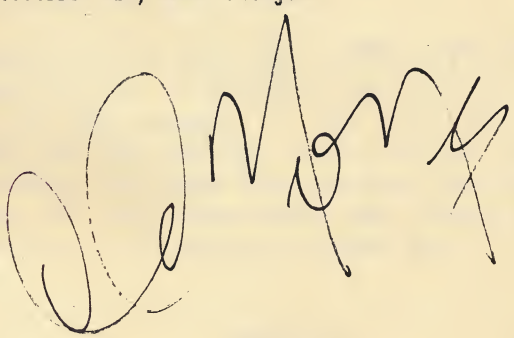
Relief at last, You now endure my last editorial, as I hand-off the literary helm to Dave Arlington. Dave is not with out experiance, and I am sure that he and the JACG NEWSLETTER will succeed...with YOUR support!

Big doings in September, Our September 10, 1989 meeting will not only be attended by many from other nearby user groups, but also by Atari's Sig Hartmann (or if unable, a senior vice-president from Atari Corp.), and by representatives of the Atari Explorer, and hopefully, other players to be named later. Stay tuned for an update in the August Neweletter, I will be coordinating the effort (hopefully I coordinate and others work at it...fat chance!

I still remain 8-bit vice-president, and also will take over the advertising...and of course, you still will have to put up with "Noise from Noyes" and whatever else I can think up!

Three years of editorializing and publishing have gone by quickly; and things have changed a lot along the way in the world of Atari during that time-frame. I remain optimistic as to the future...especially with my investment in time, hardware and software.

.....Good luck, Dave Arlington!



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEXT MEETING

AUGUST 13, 1989

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FROM THE BEGINNING

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Gary Gorski

Its official, the SEPTEMBER JACG meeting will have a representative from ATARI corp !! Watch next issue to see who. The agenda for the day still has to be worked out. Some of the other highlights of the day will be representatives from leading Atari magazines. They will be on hand to answer any questions that you might have pertaining to them.

So spread the word.....! See you at the JACG regional meeting in September! Happy computing!

ed. note: Sorry folks...I thought it was going to be a longer article than this...but, at least, it's an article!!! Heh, heh.

Continued from Page 18

loop if we enter 0 LOOP EDIT !Return to the editor after exiting the loop ' PROCEDURE Check_number CLS PRINT AT(30,12); PRINT "You entered "NUM%" ..." PAUSE 200 RETURN !Go back to our loop to get another number

One more type of loop to learn and then we're finished with this lesson (Whew!). This is the 'WHILE...WEND' type of loop. WHILE sets up a condition and if it's true it processes all the commands between WHILE and WEND (WEND stands for WHILE END) until the WHILE condition is met. The major difference between the 'WHILE...WEND' loop and the other types is that it's possible for the 'WHILE...WEND' to never be processed if the WHILE condition isn't true. With the others, they always process their loops at least once and look for an EXIT. An example follows (EX215):

```
FOR NUM%=1 to 15 !Set up our counter CLS PRINT AT(25,12);"Our number is now "NUM%"..." PAUSE 100 WHILE NUM%=10 !Do this ONLY while NUM%=10 PRINT AT(25,14);"Now in the 'WHILE...WEND' loop..." PAUSE 300 EXIT IF NUM%=10 WEND !End the while loop NEXT NUM% !Return to our counter
```

Notice that the ONLY time our WHILE...WEND loop is executed is when our variable is equal to 10. The other times, it never executes the loop. Enter all these commands and play with them. You'll learn a lot just by experimenting with them. Also, read about these commands in your GFA Basic owners manual, their examples should help serve to clarify what you've learned here.

Tom Hayslett
STar Users Group

NOISE FROM NOYES

by Dave Noyes

Although I'll be leaving the editorship of this NEWSLETTER, I will continue to populate this column with varied rantings, ravings, and anectotes. Although I don't believe for a minute that this column will leave you spellbound (and I don't mean a muscular spell-checker!)...I do hope to occasionally entertain, and even (if I may be so bold) educate you. This month's column is on SHAME. Well, I think so...anyway. To paraphrase Bob Dylan's song..."Where have all the president's gone...long time passing...etc."

What am I getting at? Well I've been a member of the JACG since February, 1985...I've missed ONE meeting (was on a business trip overseas) and I've seen, and heard tell of, many a president (of JACG). I assume that if one took such an office, that that would be an indication of responsibility, concern, vitality, Atariness (my word), and an on-going committment. Well, kiss good-bye to that "on-going" stuff. R.K. wrote an Atari book...seen him lately? A.L., I see him in the lobby at the flea market...he writes for two Atari publications...is he ever in the auditorium participating? W.M., I know he used to have a Saturday job...ain't seen much of him lately ('cept that day when he demo'd and sold HP (tm) Desk Jets). T.P., an excellant 8-bit programmer, put some good "stuff" in the JACG library, maybe saw him once since he left office...been a long time, can't remember for sure. J.K. - legitimate - in Germany on a business assignment, obviously can't make the meetings (how about a note for the newsletter now and then?). D.V.H., sure hope your advanced degree is coming along alright; swear someone told me you were going to "SYSOP" 8-bit stuff. Dunno...somethin' must have happened...haven't seen a new upload released since the Lincoln-Douglas debates. L.P., well, she's in Kansas...again...at least something in the newsletter. Get my point folks?

Well, if you don't; my point is (neither to denigrate nor embarrass anyone, but in MY way of thinking) if someone has the support and smarts to lead the JACG for a year, has the smarts to write and/or program...etc.; wouln't it be nice for a continuation of that beyond the presidency? We can all use the expertise, experience and guidance of those that WE thought enough of to elect to lead us! To paraphrase another: "Ain't that a SHAME?"

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE NEW EDITOR

Dave Arlington - JACG

I thought I would take a few lines and introduce myself and my qualifications as the next editor of this fine publication. You've probably already recognized my name from the series of Action! tutorials I've been writing (soon to resume, I promise) and a couple of Flight Simulator articles. But I thought I would give a little more background.

I'm originally from Buffalo, N.Y. and moved to the northern New Jersey area last fall due to a new job. I have owned Atari computers for the last 6 years now and have been an active member of Atari User groups all that time.

I am a die-hard 8-bitter having owned every model of 8-bits except for the 600XL and the 65XE. Lately, I've cut down to my last three, an original Atari 800, a 1200XL (see, Joe, I was one of those 1200XL owners!), and my 130XE. In Buffalo, I was assistant editor of the newsletter of the Western New York Atari Users Group for about 5 years or so. I was also a SysOp of the group's Bulletin Board during part of that time. I no longer SysOp a board, but could not resist the lure of editing a newsletter again.

Lest ST owners feel that the above paragraph means the newsletter will unduly shift to 8-bit coverage, let me lay aside those fears. In addition to all my user group activties, I spent several years in the Buffalo area working in an Atari Computer store (what else?) selling STs and software, so I have a very healthy respect for the uses and the capabilities of the ST world.

Of course, I can only print what I get, so YOUR input is, as always, VERY IMPORTANT as to what type of newsletter you will recieve. Like Dave before me, I prefer to run only original articles by our membership rather than rely on reprint material from other newsletters. So, if you want to see a well-rounded newsletter, please contribute. Be assured I will bug people if I have to. I don't really care what format the articles are submitted in, but if you have a modem, uploading them to the JACG BBS is the easiest.

I'm looking forward to try to continue the high level of quality you've become used to the last three years. I'm sure there will be a few minor changes but hopefully not any quality-wise. Thanks to the membership for giving me this opportunity.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

by Neil Van Oost Jr.,JACG

Who says you can't take it with you! I took took it with me, and I'll tell you how you can take it with you.

Faced with the prospect of spending three weeks out in Oklahoma away from my computer system was giving me fits. I didn't know if I could face that long away form my keyboard. Usually when I drive it is no problem, just pack the whole works in the back of the wagon and away I go. But since this was to be a short stay of just under three weeks I was flying.

I was trying to figure out some way to bring at least the basics with me. You know, the computer, a disk drive, a joystick and some disks. I was going to pack everything into an extra suitcase, but you know what happens after the airlines get done with your luggage. The next thing I thought of was one of those "computer cases". What stopped me in my tracks was the starting prices $$$$. There just had to be an inexpensive way to transport my computer system safely.

It wasn't until a week before I left that I found a way. I was getting the boat ready for the water and getting out all the summer odds and ends out of the shed, when I came accross the perfect traveling case for my computer. It had a sturdy plastic exterior and interior and was insulated. The lid had a snug fit, but would have to be tied down -- no problem. It was of course, my Coleman "Polylite Cooler". The cooler had an interior space which measured 18 X 11 X 10, and this was just big enough.

Gathering some of that plastic bubble material, some cardboard, nylon cord and duct tape, I set out to pack up one of my computers to take with me. My 130XE after being wrapped with a sheet of bubble material fit nice and snug in the bottom of the cooler. I put a travel cardboard protector in my 1050 drive and wrapped that also. After placing a piece of cardboard over the computer, I put the wrapped drive on top of it.

There was still space left and after a little re-arranging I managed to get my 1020 printer/plotter in there also. I still had room for one power supply and the cables and joystick. The other two power supplies and three boxes of disks went into my carry-on brief case. I taped the lid down with the duct tape and tied the whole works up securely with the nylon cord. Then I snapped on one of those wooden carrying handles on the cord and was all set to travel.

It was just a matter of renting a small 13 inch TV when I got to the appartment I was staying at, and here I am pounding away at the keyboard now. So you see you can take it with you. Of course if your system is a bit larger than mine --- Coleman makes coolers in lots of sizes and you have someplace to keep the beer cool when you get to your destination.

JULY LIBRARY NOTES

Sam Cory - JACG 8-bit Librarian

June items included NJ LEARNING LINK. I have become a member and immediately learned? What? They can only accept cash or check.

No, No, Sam not another? Yes, folks here is another "Term" program. Seems like eveyone is coming out with better ways to use our BBS. The latest and thus the best is Bob Puff's introduction BobTerm. JACG is most happy to present the latest version for the 8-bit: 1.1 (JACG#196D) it also supports Spartados 3.2D and X. It does not have those wonderful help files DeTerm makes available. DeTerm is a great learning device since it can be used for off-line practice. BobTerm uses less memory and I have found it to be more reliable. The Docs are explicit. Best YOU read them even though anyone who works their modem can run the program without. You could ask me why it is the best. Go ahead. You do? IT IS SHAREWARE, full of features, and very inexpensive. Keith Ledbetter's new Express in cartridge -64K of code- is, will be, I am sure, more complete and if up to Keith's usual work very competently done (GENIE beta testing people say so). In fact the main problem with all the new cartridges is how to make them accessable to the computer. On a 400/800/800XL, how to see the monitor behind the trembling Empire State stack. On a 130XE, how to make the table long enough. Many good suggestions are being made. Read the GENIE Roundtables. Some entreprenur will make money on a good solution. As I recall the price is around $60.

For those of you who are having trouble with DeTerm I am arranging for an updated copy. By the August meeting This should be available. If so we will replace yours at no cost. The main requirement will be your name and JACG number with the disk.

Please support our magazines. If they fail, clubs and BBSs will be the only cohesive force left. Also, just because we are adding $1 to each shareware disk does NOT relieve you of that responsibility. Anyone who wishes to add $5 or $10 to the JACG check just contact any of the officers with your donation. That is the best way to ensure more and better Shareware. Bob Puff will be the first recipient with his disk this month. It is nice to have summer. Enjoy. My strawberries were real good. The Heritage raspberries are tasting memorably..

Some BBS gleanings.

XF551 drive does not always switch densities properly. Not at all with Dos XL... Did you know that on ATARI disks the first three sectors are all Single Density. Otherwise our babies can't read them.... If you use GENIE, Beware all pointers are dropped at 30 days. Bob Mulhearn can tell you how to establish new pointers. Ask him. This column will also explain it next time... Dos XE does NOT work on 400/800 machines. Opinion of Dos XE is another Dos 3.

New Address:
Micromiser Software
31413 Westward Ho
Sorrento, Fl 32776
Tel 1-904-383-0745

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST

Neil Van Oost Jr., - JACG

"Into The Eagle's Nest", one of Atari's "new" releases for the XE Video Game Machine, which also plays on all XE and XL Computer Systems. I have seen this game on a friend's ST and the conversion to the 8-bit machines lost nothing. It looks as good, if not better on my XE. I purchased my copy in Oklahoma City, at the only Atari store in the city that I could find, for $23.95. Incase any of you get out that way or our newsletter finds its way to any user groups in Oklahoma, the store is: Info 1 Computers, 3703 N.W. 50th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73112, phone 405-942-7768. They had a fairly large selection of 8-bit software and an even larger one of ST software.

In this action, arcade type adventure you are to infiltrate the Eagle's Nest and rescue the prisoners. You have to do this before their resistance breaks and they give away secrets. You must also destroy the Eagle's Nest with explosives you will find hidden in the castle. Along the way don't forget to collect and save as many of the stolen art treasures that you can find.

As you start your mission, you will find yourself smuggled into the storage room in the Eagle's Nest. You can hear a couple Nazi guards outside your door. They are part of the division stationed in the castle. You will need all the cunning and bravery you can summon up. With a bead of presperation on your upper lip and a sinking feeling in your stomach, you burst through the door firing your automatic weapon....

There are four different missions you can select from this Atari supper cartridge. With lots of action to give you many happy hours of gaming/adventuring. I would recommend this program even tho the action comes fast. After several early deaths, I was able to map out a strategy and live a little longer with each new game.

ST LIBRARY

JULY DISK OF THE MONTH
John H. Dean, ST V.P.

Our Disk Of the Month for July is a new disk, #145, a TELEcommunication Disk containing VANTERM3.7 along with some neat supporting programs, QUICKVIEW.PRG, QUICKPRT.ACC & TRANSFER.ACC.

VANTERM is an excellent Shareware GEM supported communication program for the ST, authored by Mr. Van Nest of Vanguard Datasystems. If you have Shadow (a background file transfer program by Paul Lee) installed, Vanterm will see it and permit you to use it directly. The Docs for Vanterm make reference to DCOPY. You may safely use DCOPY312, which was can be found . JACG_LIB.145, one of the DOM for June.

TRANSFER.ACC, a Shareware Desk Top Accessory by Thos. E. Zerucha, is also included on this DOM. It includes VT-52 emulation, Port settings, Phone (chatting), Up/Downloading, and SEAlink as a receive option.

QUICKPRT.ACC is another DTA on Disk #145. This will make fast screen dumps of text based screens. By default it is configured to generate the normal graphical screen dumps. When the "text" option is selected, screen dumps will come out as ASCII text, similar to IBM's Print Screen key.

QUIKVIEW.PRG is really slick for viewing text files. Unlike the Desk Top "Show", the .le is loaded into memory, and you can then view it page by page, forward or backward, top to bottom. It also has a 'Print' button, but it 'timed out' when I tried it with my Gemini Star 10x. However, when I used it with a Print Spooler, it printed to the end of the spooler, and continued when the button 'TRY AGAIN' on the dialog box was clicked. Both of these 'Quick' utilities are Shareware, written by Darek Mihocka & Ignac Kolenko. If you use them, be sure to send your fair share of the cost of developing them for your use.

A NOTE ABOUT SHAREWARE

As I have noted above, and in previous articles, Shareware must be respected, and our share paid, if it is to be effective, and to continue. I recently sent my check to Double Click Software at their Houston, Texas address, and it was returned "MOVED LEFT NO ADDRESS". I am now trying to reach the authors of DCFORMAT, and will let you know how I make out.

THE ST DISK LIBRARY

UPDATED DISK #000
By John H. Dean JACG ST V.P.

Disk # JACG_LIB.000 has not been a good seller at out meetings, because it has not been updated for some time. THIS IS NO LONGER TRUE!

MEET DISK JACGL689.000

JACG now has a new catalog of all the disks in the ST 'Public Domain' Library, from Disk #1 through Disk #145. This new disk is now available, and will be available, at all our meetings, or by mail. The cost of this disk to our members will be a special price of $3.00 at each meeting. If you bring in your original JACG_LIB.000 in exchange, it will be $2.00. For non-members, the cost is $5.00. Add a $1.00 if you order by mail from our Mail Order Librarian, Bill Garmany, 13 Wellington Rd., Livingston, NJ 07039.

This is a NEW disk. The previous disk has been completely up-dated by removing some unworkable disks and adding descriptions and other identifiers as necessary. But the information is presented in a completely different format.

The new disk, #JACGL689.000 now includes DCOPY312. This very useful utility program includes a command 'T' which will load the disk catalog into memory and then lets you view it page by page (something like Quickview), but also has a 'search' routine. The REAMDE1ST file on the catalog disk has a fuller explanation. The SORTER file has been retained, and with this utility you can sort the catalog listing by combination of fields as you desire. Instructions to do this are in the SORTER.HLP file. An update of DC.TOS from JACG_LIB.000 will be included on a future disk for the library.

Updating this disk was certainly a learning experience! One of the things I learned is that the JACG has a wonderful variety of programs available. Wordprocessors, data bases, spreadsheets,

games for young and old, programming languages, clip and graphic art, tele-communication programs, text processors, compilers, utilities, you name it!

But it seems that no matter how many we have, there are always more to come. If you have some programs that you think should be in our library, let me know. We can always work out an exchange to our mutual advantage.

PC DITTO LIBRARY

By a show of hands at the June meeting you indicated that we should have a ST Library for the PC Ditto emulator. Peter Rotton has volunteered to head up this Library extension, and will shortly have some disks available. Look for them at our next meeting. We will try to keep you informed of this new development through the JACG newsletter.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Greetings:

Dave, I think I am speaking for all the members of JACG when I thank you for all the work you have done as Editor of our Newsletter. We are sorry to lose you as Editor, but are glad that you will carry on with us in your other activities. Your contribution to not only the newsletter, but to JACG in particular, has been outstanding. Thank you!

Dave Arlington, thank you for your acceptance of the challenge to be our Editor. It's a tough job, but it's one of the main reasons we can exist as a viable Atari Users Group. We will all try to help you as much as we can with articles, reviews, news, and off course, lots of advice. Maybe some of it will also be good. Anyway, GOOD LUCK!

GFA BASIC
GFA Basic
Class 2

I'm not going to review what we learned last time since you have the documentation from class 1. We do however, need to go into a little explanation here first...

When working in the editor, the 'NEW' command will erase the current program you have in memory and allow you to start again with a fresh editor. Care should be exercised when entering the NEW command, be sure you've saved any program you want to keep BEFORE entering NEW.

Variables are used extensively in any BASIC language we use. A variable is simply a symbol (usually a letter or word or number) that we use in a program when that variable needs to change to many different values (or characters). For example, I know you've all seen or heard statements like this one pertaining to programming 'LET X=5' (for some reason, 'X' seems to be popular). All this means is that we've assigned the value of 5 to a variable called 'X'. If we had a short program like this (EX21):

```
LET X=5 PRINT X
```

Guess what would be printed? Right, the number 5. Okay, there are several different types of variables we may use to help BASIC understand what type of information we want it to save. All variables MUST start with a letter and be ONLY 1 word long. You should NOT use a BASIC command as a variable (even though it IS possible). Another example (EX22):

```
LET Our_number=5 PRINT Our_number
```

This statement is functionally identical to the first example. Notice that when I used the variable 'Our_number', there's an underscore connecting the 2 words. This is to keep our variable 1 'word' long (remember the rules?).

Now for some of the different TYPES of variables we may use. A letter or word alone indicates 'normal' or 'real' variables. They can be numbers only and are accurate to 11 digits. EXAMPLE: LET X=234.15723 assigns that numeric value to the variable 'X'. A variable with a suffix of '%' indicates an 'integer' variable, in other words, whole numbers between 2, 147,483,647 and -2,147,483,648. The advantage of 'integer' variables is that they are much faster as BASIC doesn't have to compute the numbers out to 11 places (including decimal places). EXAMPLE: LET X%=5 assigns the number 5 to our 'integer' variable 'X%'. Another type of variable is the 'string' variable. These are indicated by the suffix '$' and can contain ANY

characters less than 255 in length. The value assigned to string variables must be enclosed in quotation marks. EXAMPLE: LET X$="Hello there!". This assigns the 'value' 'Hello there!' to the string variable 'X$'. You may change the value of a variable within a program by assigning it a new value and the use of 'LET' is optional. EXAMPLE (EX23):

```
REM Short variable routine LET X=1   !I could have left 'LET' out Y=2      !I DID leave 'LET' out Total%=3   !Notice the '%'? 'Total%' is only another variable NAM$="Tom Hayslett"  !You may have spaces or ANYTHING in there LONG_NAM$="Thomas W. Hayslett, W?" !Any characters (up to 255) '        !A 'REM' line to separate parts of our program PRINT X PRINT Y PRINT Total% PRINT NAM$ ? LONG_NAM$
```

Our screen would look like this: 1 2 3 Tom Hayslett (Notice it does NOT print the quotes!) Thomas W. Hayslett, W?

Simple huh? Now lets see how we can use variables for a good purpose. You may perform mathematical functions on numeric variables just as if they were numbers. Math functions in BASIC include '+' or 'ADD' for addition, '-' or 'SUB' for subtraction, '/' or 'DIV' for division and '*' or 'MUL' for multiplication. There are also '=' for equal to, '<>' for not equal to, '<' for less than, '>' for greater than, '<= or =<' for equal to or less than and '>= or =>' for equal to or greater than.

```
EXAMPLE (EX24): X%=10 Y%=5 Total%=X%+Y% ? Total%
```

This would print the integer variable 'Total%' on our screen which has the value of 'X%' and 'Y%' added together. It would print 15. You may also use some of the mathematical symbols to combine string variables.

```
EXAMPLE (EX25): NAM$="Tom" Last_nam$="Hayslett" ? NAM$+Last_nam$
```

You must enclose your string variables in quotes and guess what our example would print? It would print TomHayslett. Oops! To correct this, we would have to change our string variable 'NAM$' to "Tom ", the space would also print making our screen show Tom Hayslett.

Now, to make what we've learned useful, our numbers and strings must come from somewhere so where do we get them? One common source is from the person using our program. How? We use the 'INPUT' command. It's use is simple, EXAMPLE: INPUT X%. This pauses and waits for the user to enter a number. If they enter a character (A,b,q,etc.), a bell will sound and they can try again. The 'INPUT' command will also print a question mark for you if you use a semicolon with it like this: INPUT;X% You may also include instructions with the input command if you use it like this: INPUT "Instructions";X% 'Instructions' may be any string of text you want to precede the question mark. You may also request input of a character string by simply requesting a string variable. EXAMPLE: INPUT "Please enter your name";NAM$ Our screen would look like this:

Please enter your name? _ (The underscore indicates where our flashing cursor would be)

Okay, now on to another example (EX26).

```
REM Example program using input, variables and math CLS !Clear the screen ?        !Print a blank line INPUT "Please enter your name and press RETURN ",NAM$ !See below ' This asks the user to enter their name ?        Print another blank line INPUT "Now, please enter a number ",X% ? INPUT "A second number also please ",Y% ? ? "Thank you "NAM$", please touch any key and I'll print the" ? "total of the 2 numbers you entered..." Key=INP(2)    !Wait for any key to be pressed Total%=X%+Y% PRINT AT(39,12);Total% !Prints total of the 2 numbers PAUSE 150        !Pause for 3 seconds CLS PRINT AT(36,12);"Goodbye "NAM$", returning to the editor" PAUSE 200 EDIT
```

Whew! If you follow the program line by line it's easy to see exactly what it's doing in each step. You may also combine your INPUT statements and ask for more than one item at a time as follows, INPUT "Name and age: ",NAM$,AGE%. Notice we used a comma instead of a semi colon (same as in the first few lines of the example program above)? The comma along with the semicolon allows us to define how we want the screen to look when we request information. We could also use it like this: INPUT "Name and age? ",NAM$,AGE%. We may include the ? if we desire. We need to learn a few other commands now to make what we've already learned more meaningful.

We're going to learn about several types of loops. A loop is simply a routine in a program that continues whatever process it's doing until a pre determined condition is met. Lets start with the simplest form first, the IF THEN type of loop. An 'IF...THEN' really isn't a true loop per say but it's often used as one. IF sets up a condition that if true will process a certain statement. Every IF must be ended with an 'ENDIF'. A simple form is as follows (EX27):

```
IF NAM$="Tom" THEN PRINT "Hello Tom" ENDIF
```

If the condition is true (string variable 'NAM$' = Tom), the following command is executed. If our string variable 'NAM$' does NOT = Tom, the complete loop would be bypassed. What if we wanted it to do something else if that condition wasn't met? Here's where the 'ELSE' command comes into play. It means if the preceding statement wasn't true then do this.

```
IF NAM$="Tom" THEN PRINT "Hello Tom" ELSE PRINT "Hello
somebody else" ENDIF
```

In this case, if our string variable = Tom it would print 'Hello Tom', if it didn't equal 'Tom' it would print 'Hello somebody else' then it would end the 'if' (leave the loop). These 'IF...THEN...ELSE...ENDIF' commands can be nested, that is you may have them inside another 'IF...ENDIF' loop. The editor in GFA will help you keep track of how many loops you are deep as it controls the indenting of the commands. Each 'IF' must be closed with an 'ENDIF'. Another example (EX29):

```
IF NAM$="Tom" THEN PRINT "Hello Tom" ELSE IF NAM$="Bob"
THEN
   PRINT "Hello Bob" ENDIF ENDIF
```

Notice we have 2 'ENDIF' commands because we have 2 'IF's. A numeric example would be as follows (EX210):

```
INPUT "Please enter a number between 1 and 10",NUM% IF
NUM%< 5 THEN PRINT "Your number is less than 5" ELSE IF
NUM%=>5 AND NUM%<=10 THEN
   PRINT "Your number is larger than 4 but less than 11"
ELSE
   PRINT "You cheated! Your number was too big!" ENDIF
ENDIF
```

This asks for a number to be entered that's between 1 and 10 (NUM%). If the number is less than 5 it prints 'Your number was less than 5'. If the number is equal to or greater than 5 AND equal to or less than 10 it prints 'Your number is larger than 4 but less than 11'. If the user enters a number larger than 10, it goes to the 'ELSE' which prints 'You cheated! Your number was too big!'. Then we have our 2 'ENDIF' commands to end the 'IF's.

Another type of a loop is a 'DO...LOOP'. You tell it to do something continuously until a pre determined condition is met. You exit a 'DO...LOOP' with the 'EXIT...IF' command. Sometimes when writing a program, you may accidentally write loops without an exit. To stop the program and return to the editor, press the CONTROL, ALTERNATE and SHIFT keys simultaneously. This is called a 'BREAK'. lets look at an example of a 'DO...LOOP' (EX211).

```
DO    !Starts our loop CLS !Clear the screen INPUT "Please
enter a number between 1 and 10 ",NUM% !Gets NUM% IF
NUM%=3 THEN     !If the number is 3
   PRINT "You guessed my lucky number!"  !Then print this
   PAUSE 300    !Pause for 6 seconds ELSE    !if it isn't
3, then do this
   PRINT "Wrong. Please try again..."
   PRINT "Press any key to continue..."
   KEY=INP(2)     !Wait for any key to be pressed ENDIF IF
NUM%=>11 THEN  !If you enter a number we don't want then
   PRINT "You didn't follow instructions."
   PAUSE 300 ENDIF EXIT IF NUM%=>11   !This exits our
'DO...LOOP' when NUM%=>11 LOOP
```

Another type of looping can be done with the 'FOR...NEXT' command. It usually starts a counter and processes the commands between the FOR and the NEXT as long as the counter is still valid. For example: FOR NUM%= 1 to 10 states that our integer variable (NUM%) will equal 1, then 2, then 3, etc. up to 10. When the program encounters the NEXT command it returns to the FOR to process the commands between FOR and NEXT again. For example (EX212):

```
FOR NUM%=1 to 10 PRINT PRINT NUM%  !This will print our
variable NEXT NUM%   !This sends our program back to the
first line
```

Each time through, NUM% will be printed so your screen will look like this

```
1

2

3

ETC.
```

Another type of loop is the 'REPEAT...UNTIL' loop. REPEAT starts the loop and it continues until the condition set in the UNTIL command is true. For example (EX213):

```
REPEAT   !Starts the loop CLS INPUT "Please enter a number
between 1 and 10 ",NUM% !Gets NUM% IF NUM%=5 THEN   !If
the number input=5 then
   PRINT "Good guess!"
   PAUSE 300 ELSE
   PRINT "Wrong! Press any key to try again..."
   KEY=INP(2) ENDIF UNTIL NUM%=5   !This exits if the
number was 5
```

Another command essential to programming is the 'GOSUB' command. This directs your program to a particular routine that you may want to perform any number of times. The 'GOSUB' command can be abbreviated '@' and the location you want your program to go to must begin with 'PROCEDURE'. To return from the 'PROCEDURE' to your program, simply end the PROCEDURE with 'RETURN'. That sends you back to the line after the GOSUB command. This is best demonstrated with an example (EX214):

```
DO CLS PRINT AT(10,10);     !Print a blank line to move
10,10 INPUT "Please enter a number (1 - 25) ",NUM% IF
NUM%=>1 AND NUM%=<25 THEN GOSUB Check_number !Execute
PROCEDURE named Check_number ENDIF EXIT IF NUM%="0" !Exits
```

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ZMAGAZINE'S

Z*NET

The International Atari Newsletter

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July 1989 Vol. I No. 5

ATARI and the Consumer Electronics Show

*by Mike Lechkun and the Z*Net Staff*

In a hastily called press conference that drew no more than 35 people, Atari Corp's Sam Tramiel introduced the (not yet named) Atari Portable Color Entertainment System. It was Saturday, June 3rd, at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, a preview of what we'll see on store shelves around Christmas time. The Atari game unit, which was a well guarded secret until the press conference, is powered by 6 AA batteries or AC adaptor, or (optionally) 12 volt auto adaptor. Developed by Epyx and built and marketed by Atari, it is designed to compete directly with Nintendo's newly introduced "Game Boy", also a hand-held game unit. CES fills Chicago's massive McCormick Place and adjacent McCormick Place West, and Nintendo occupied over 30% of the West facility, the largest booth in CES history.

Atari, on the other hand, was again criticized by some as having a generally lackluster display "encampment", although large and well placed. Nevertheless, the new Atari game was the immediate hit of the press, and has appeared in newspapers, network TV, and even on MTV. It has a 3.5" color LCD screen (160 x 102 pixels) capable of over 4,000 colors on a unit about the size of a video cassette. It has four-channel sound and comes with stereo headphones for private enjoyment too. A jack also allows interconnection with up to eight other units for group play. Games come on a 128K credit card sized cart, and can be loaded into the unit memory then removed for loading into the next in the connected chain, allowing a group to play with only a single cart. Software will allow each player a private point-of view while playing. The Atari Portable Color Entertainment System (I hope they name it soon!) runs a 65C02 CPU at 16Mhz. Stories of Nintendo officials calling the Atari machine "overkill, like driving a Ferarri to the grocery store" were met by Sam Tramiel with "I'd rather drive a Ferarri ANYWHERE, besides, we don't have a Ferarri price!"

Atari has six titles ready, including Impossible Mission, Blue Lightning, and California Games. Game prices will stay in the $20-$35 range. The new game machine also features a 180 degree function which allows a lefty to play the unit easily . It will come with carrying case and strap. The unit is tentatively set to retail for $149.95, although the price may change in response to Game Boy's suggested list of $89.95. We should see it on store shelves as soon as September.

Atari also announced an under-$200 68000 based game machine to be introduced "first quarter, 1990". Additionally, Atari showed the Atari PC-4, a 286-AT clone (with 3.5" disk drive and 30 meg HD), being delayed by FCC approval due to non-standard case configuration. Also shown at the press conference was the Atari Portfolio.

Emphasis in the Atari booth was on software, including the 2600, 7800 and XE systems. The 7800 system will see the bulk of the new titles, to include Commando, Tower Toppler, Double Dunk, Jinx, Xenophobe, Airball, and more. The 2600 will also see some of these titles and more of its own. The biggest announcement for the 8-bit community was the soon to be release of XE-MIDI MAZE. Developed by James Yee of Xanth Software, this version will interface with the ST version, and can also be played by modem (or by GENie, as Mr. Yee offered!). Also coming for the 8-bit is Deflecktor and Zenophobe.

Atari had a large display of calculators. Most were in common type configurations--solar, printing, and "artsy". Atari indicated it's desire to become a major player in the calculator market. Observers have commented that Atari has begun a trend of marketing other people's products... calculators, the MIDI HOTZ machine, and now the Epyx game system. Stock market reaction to the new product announcement was marked- up $2 to $8 a share after many months of no change. ■

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Z*NET NEWSWIRE

☞ Last month, Atari was on display at the CEPS show, a special national desktop publishing show. Sig Hartmann, Jay Crosby, Rich Marlow and Karen Bowen were on hand. We were told that the 1040 DTP system was not that big of a hit, while the Portfolio and new PC4 got plenty of attention.

☞ Atari is rumored to be announcing a pair of new machines (in addition to the portable game system mentioned in detail on this month's Z*NET front page) on August 25. One is expected to be another game system, probably a high-end unit (also rumored NOT to be ST-compatible), and the other is to be a new serious computer. This might be, finally, the 68030 "TT" computer that has tantalized the press for over a year. We will follow this story in ST*Zmag and ZMAG online at your favorite telecommunications service.

☞ Several Japanese computer magazines are claiming that a laptop version of the Atari ST computer with a Japanese language feature will debut in Japan this Summer, and support the claim with a mock-up photograph. An Atari Japanese spokesman said the outside of the basic Atari ST laptop and the inside specifications are under consideration. Prices will exceed $1,400.00.

☞ A new book called "The Software Encyclopedia 1989: A Comprehensive Guide to Software Packages for Business, Professional or Personal Use," published by R. R. Bowker. Price is just $179.95 listing 20,000 software titles. The brands covered within the publication include IBM, Commodore, Atari 8/16 bit, CP/M, Unix, Tandy and Texas Instruments. This two volume release has full descriptions on all software listed.

☞ Now run your original TOS in ROM or simply switch to the new Atari TOS 1.4 or any other TOS chip! The SOS upgrade consists of a socketed board with an external switch. The special introductory price is only $70, with a suggested retail of $99.00. This offer expires August 30. Bill's Designs, 1246-A Nike Street, Huntsville, Alabama 35808 or call (205) 837-4018

☞ 1st STOP Computer Systems Ltd. recently announced four new price leading ST disk drives. The new drives include a matching pair of drives in metal cabinets, one is a 3.5" drive and the other is a 5.25" drive, both double-sided. The units are stackable and have a custom switcher cable option available (free if you buy both units). These units will retail for $219.95 but are available for an introductory price of $169.95. 1st STOP Computer Systems, 7085 Corporate Way, Dayton, OH 45459. 1-800-252-2787.

☞ Rich Tsukiji of ST-World announced another World of Atari show. The third show of the tour is scheduled for August 19th and 20th in Dallas Texas at the Holiday Inn Holidome. Additional shows currently under consideration are Seattle Washington in October, and a return to Anahiem California in early 1990. ST-World (503) 673-2259.

☞ InterSect Software, the developers of InterLink, will be releasing Masterlink this month. Masterlink operates with all dialing, file transfers, scripts and mini BBS as background tasks. You can exit, enter other programs while the background tasks are running. It will be available as an upgrade to registered Interlink owners. Also, look for a new game called "War of the Warriors" from InterSect by Christmas. 800-826-0130 or 801-923-8774.

☞ The WAACE group from the Washington/Maryland area has announced an AtariFest for October 7th and 8th. This is the same area where Current Notes originates. Details as the become available.

☞ Bob Klaas of Utah has bought the rights to the SUPRA hard drive interface for the 8-bit Atari. He has begun production again and now calls it the K-P Hard Drive Interface. It will sell for $110 plus shipping. The Supra sold at $149, and the K-P will be identical right down to the case. You will have to supply your own drive, controller, and power supply as before. It will operate with an XL or XE machine by attaching to the expansion bus, and the XE adaptor is another $15 (plus handling). K-Productions, 801-966-1697.

☞ Ginny Teal of Avant Garde recently told Z*Net that their new product PC-Ditto II appears to be physically incompatible with most or all of the hardware accelerator boards that have introduced this year. For example, the $99.00 JRI Accelerater has an additional circuit board covering the replacement 68000 chip. As the PC-Ditto IBM emulator board must mount directly on top of the 68000, this prevents the use of both systems. Avant Garde's primary focus at this point is to get the hardware out and worry about other hardware interfacing at a later date. PC-Ditto II is experiencing small production delays which will postpone the commercial introduction by not more then a month. Production should begin in early July.

☞ The Atari Portfolio pocket PC will not be appearing in the black color shown in the prototype. Z*Net has been told that black plastic produces an unsatisfactory finish. The production units are going to be dark gray. At least one prospective major distributor is pushing for additional production of the hand held computer in assorted pastel colors.

☞ ANTIC MAGAZINE, the long standing 8-bit Atari specialty mag, has announced that they are discontinuing their no-disk release, and existing subscriptions must be changed over to mag-and-disk (at a 1/2 reduction of the outstanding subscription) or be cancelled. The move may help or hurt Antic, whose disks were widely shared by magazine-only subscribers previously.

☞ A 24-year-old West German computerist apparently committed suicide after being accused of using his expertise to provide Soviet KGB agents with stolen access code and passwords to gain access to Western computers. Police say the body of a man found burned to death, has been identified as the individual under investigation in connection with the computer scandal that came to light last March. The German apparently doused himself with gasoline and set himself on fire. The investigation of others involved is continuing.

☞ In a recent Computer Shopper article, Practical Solution's phone number was printed in error, and in our most recent issue of Z*Net we printed the same wrong number. The correct number is: 602-322-6100. In our report of the MACE Show, we listed the WAUG user group as being from Westland Michigan. They are actually based in Ann Arbor. We pulled the misinformation from the MACE Show Program, and we apologize on behalf of MACE and our error. WAUG stands for the Washtenaw County Atari Users Group. ■

RATTY'S RAP

*by Matthew Ratcliff (Mat*Rat)*

Atari's new hand held game machine, affectionately called Game Pro by some, is garnering a LOT of attention. Some of you may have heard of a similar offering from Nintendo called the Game Boy. Does Atari's offering stack up? YES! Absolutely!

The Game Pro, at 160x192 pixels, has a higher resolution than the Game Boy. The Game Pro can display 16 colors, out of a palette of 4096. The Game Boy? How about 4 exciting shades of grey? But, golly, the Game Boy can be EXPANDED to allow two players to compete over an add on modem. Can the Game Pro do that? NO! It's BETTER!!! Let's say you have a new Game Pro, and a hot new game, and SEVEN FRIENDS just dying to play too. No sweat. Plug all the Game Pros together, daisy chain style - simpler than adding peripherals to the Atari XE home computer. Player one inserts his new game card, loads the software, removes the card, and passes it on to the next player. Within moments 8 kids, standing on a street corner, waiting for the morning bus, are screaming with delight, dancing a funny little jig that only hard core coin op arcade fanatics will recognize! Oh, sound? The Nintendo Game Boy has stereo sound. Oh, wow. The Atari Game Pro has FM, 4 CHANNEL, STEREO sound and it comes with stereo headphones. This is one extremely HOT TOY! But, Atari doesn't deserve all the credit. According to some reports, this game machine was designed by Epyx and purchased outright by Atari. It's an extremely shrewd tactic on the part of Atari, to make the FIRST and BEST move in a market that Nintendo is working toward. But, Atari bought this completed product design so they could MARKET it themselves. What is the LAST PRODUCT Atari has marketed properly and completely successfully in the United States? Can you say 2600? I knew you could! Right now all we need is software! I think a lot of worried Commodore 64 software developers are drooling over the prospects of this extremely cool toy.

Is the 8bit dead? Not in the eyes of Atari. The company no longer pushes the hardware. It sort of sells itself, at a rather slow but extremely steady pace. I know of nearly a dozen NEW titles, including some HOT coin op properties, being developed for XL, XE, and XEGS owners. All you 400/800 owners need to wake up and smell the coffee. Nearly ALL new game cartridges from Atari do NOT run on 48k 400/800 machines. In other words, Atari no longer supports these machines. I suggest that you upgrade to an XEGS or 130XE soon if you are interested in running any of the new software.

Xenophobe for the XEGS was demoed at CES. Althought its graphics aren't quite as slick as the 7800 version, it is more playable. All Atari versions of Xenophobe simply BLOW AWAY the Nintendo implementation, however. Once the Nintendo is stretched beyond it's basic strengths (running, juming, climbing games) its flaws begin to show. Tower Toppler is coming to the 8bit very soon, too. We should see between 4 and 8 ALL NEW cartridges for the 8bit Atari by the end of 1989. And Atari is commited to producing another 4 to 8 games for the XEGS in 1990 as well.

Applications? Where are the applications? Well, somebody slipped up (sound familiar?) and allowed Atari to completely run out of Atariwriter Plus. It seems odd that Atariwriter 80 would start shipping at about the same time. However, I have been assured by two sources within Atari (that's on the TRAMIEL SIDE of that revolving door) that a new production run of Atariwriter Plus is being made.

Although I have been assured DOZENS OF TIMES by John Skruch that Atari has the XES2001 light gun in stock, ready to ship to dealers, no one in the US has ever seen this package. This is supposed to be a light gun and the Bug Hunt game in a $30 package. I was told over 6 months ago that "they are in stock, right here in our warehouse". My dealer has asked for it repeatedly. I've talked to half a dozen other sources at Atari and no one knows anything beyond the ONE TASK that is his primary function at the company. If you want a light gun, buy one for the SEGA and hack it. There is a 3rd party company supplying light guns for the Amiga, Commodore 64, and, yes, even the Atari 8bit home computers. Antic has a revew of it in the works.

Are you looking for Educational Software? Unicorn software used to put out a very nice line of educational products for the ST. Atari liked their offerings and bought the entire line. Dealers haven't been able to get the product since. Why? Was Atari simply gobbling up the competition to Bently Bear's educational series, or did someone drop the ball in production and marketing AGAIN?

Although getting support out of Electronic Arts for the ST is nearly impossible, they do continue to distribute First Byte software. First Byte produces a line of "smooth talker" educational software geared toward small pre-schoolers, employing digitized speech.

If you have children between the ages of 2 and 5 I can HIGHLY RECOMMEND "Mixed Up Mother Goose", from Sierra On Line. My boys, ages 3 and 5, love this uncomplicated, and subtly educational adventure, in which all of the Mother Goose rhymes are mixed up. The child controls a character with a mouse, keyboard, or joystick to collect items and people and deliver them to the proper location to complete the nursery story. Hints are given in text and graphical form, so junior doesn't have to be able to read to play. The graphics, and animation sequences are quite well done, with charming music. The animation presented for completing a nursery rhyme is the reward for a job well done, and my children want to see them over, and over again.

Well, after puzzling over the cost of an Amiga for several months, I finally bit the bullet and bought another ST! I got a deal I just couldn't refuse. Will I abandon the 8bit? I certainly don't intend to. Software trickles in for me to review, and I still have a few TALKING program ideas to develop. But, I want to get back into some more progressive languages like C and Pascal, on a REAL 16 bit microprocessor.

Does anyone have an idea for a useful utility or small application for the 8bit? I've got some educational software in the works, but they entertain young children. I've written DIR3, 3 across directory lister, and FTYPE, fast file typer, utilities for Analog. TALKEYS hooks 8k of speech data and assembly language into the RAM under your XL/XE/XEGS internal BASIC. Then, whenever you press a key, your computer TELLS YOU what key you typed. It's a handy utility for data entry, and also for little kids learning to recognize letters and numbers. Do you have any suggestions? Drop me some EMAIL on GEnie (MAT.RAT), or Delphi (MATRAT). Or you can use the PMAIL (postal mail). Send your ideas, comments, flames, rebuttals, etc. to: Matthew Ratcliff, Ratware Softworks, 32 S. Hartnett Ave., St. Louis, MO 63135. ■

CHRIS ROBERTS: NEW ATARI USER GROUP COORDINATOR

Interview and Story by Bob Brodie and John Nagy

Atari Corporation has at last filled the position of User Group Coordinator by hiring Chris Roberts. Chris will also be handling all coordination of Atarifests and show appearances. The position was previously held by Cindy Claveran, and Sandy Austin before her, but had included developer support duties that made the job nearly impossible.

Chris comes to Atari with first hand experience in user groups. He was president of the P.A.L.A.C.E. user group (Pasadena Area Local Atari Computer Enthusiasts) in southern California for two years. He was involved with the Glendale Southern California Atari Faire, and ran his own BBS, The Dragon. He has extensive experience in 8-bit Ataris, and is a proficient programmer favoring Basic XE on the 8 and True Basic on the ST. A number of Chris's original 8-bit games are still available on GEnie and CompuServe. His articles on Spectre 128 have been published in ST-Xpress, and he also worked for The Federated Group. Most recently, Chris was employed by Hughes Aircraft doing computer work. He currently has a program for the ST under submission to ARTWARE, an ST developer. Chris is 32, a native Californian, and is married with 3 children aged 2, 5, and 6.

This is good news for Atari 8 bitters, for at last they truly have "one of their own" inside Atari, helping on the front line. User group officers will appreciate knowing that Chris has already shared their path. He knows the trials of running a group!

Z*Net spoke with Chris for nearly two hours on his first day at Atari (June 12) and we were really impressed with his energy and enthusiasm for his new job. He has a lot of ideas to improve the support of user groups. He indicated that Atari is dedicated to improving their support of user groups, and wants to improve their communications with them. He repeated Sam Tramiel's request of last year, that groups can best help Atari right now by approaching dealers and trying to get them interested in ATARI. It will be easier and more attractive to be an Atari dealer tan ever before.

We asked Chris if he felt insecure knowing the history of rapid turnover at Atari, and he laughed and said he was already too busy to worry about anything but work. He feels he has a lot to offer Atari and the user groups, and expects to be around a long time. One of the projects he hopes to see implemented is a multi-level state, regional, national, and even international network of user groups, independent of Atari but in close association with it. Chris expects that a group should be able to be as small as five people and still be recognized. The only other requirements he thinks should be relevant are monthly meetings and bylaws with a strong anti-piracy clause.

Chris hopes to get a developer's kit and access to a private area on GEnie telecommunications network for each registered club. The special SIG there will offer a place to get the newest information direct from Atari as well as keep groups in close communication. Other plans are to revive the User Group Newsletter on an every-other-month basis... without fail. That may be a tall order, as Chris will go to EVERY consumer event that Atari is involved with! Look for him at Atarifests and World Of Atari shows!

In our conversation there was a real note of pride in Chris's voice when asked about his office equipment. "I've got a Mega ST. and the original prototype Atari Laser printer! What a piece of history! They had planned to put in a font cartridge, apparently, 'cause there's a slot on the printer for it. No cartridge, but the printer still works great!!!" Who else but a diehard Atari user would get excited about that printer? "This job is a dream come true for me", he said. "I've been after Sig Hartmann for some time for this position. Every time there has been an opening, I've been on the phone asking for the position. I finally got it!"

Chris stressed that he had stacks of mail to go through that had accumulated since Cindy left, and that the existing database of user groups was almost unusable and very incomplete. He asked EVERY GROUP to PLEASE send him a card with their group name, official address, president's name and phone number. Including a newsletter is optional. Even if your group registered last year, PLEASE send it in again... so many groups did not register last year, some due to the questions about a dealer sponsor, that Chris just would prefer to start over. Send to: Chris Roberts, User Group Coordinator, Atari Corporation, 1196 Borregas Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94086.

Of course, you could always call him him at Atari, his phone number is (408)745-2052. This is a direct line to him. Soon you will also be able to reach him on GEnie.

As the main interface of the User and Atari, Chris promises that he will always be honest with the public. "If I don't know the answer to a question, that's what I'll say, I won't make something up, and I will try to find the real answer," he stated. Items Chris passed on to us in our first talk included: No MEGA 1 or 6 in the USA... FOR SURE; there is serious discussion again about offering the BLITTER upgrade for the 520 and 1040; the upswing of national advertising is REAL, with major campaigns coming in top magazines to help inspire dealer and buyer confidence; and the products to be announced by Atari on August 25 will be EXCITING.

Z*Net looks forward to a great relationship with Chris and Atari, and offer our Congratulations and Best Wishes, Chris! ■

NEW ST SOFTWARE ANNOUNCED AT CES

Compiled by Mike Lechkun

Broderbund (415) 492-3200 showed versions of The New Print Shop, adds and improves many features, ST version is about ready.

Spectrum Holobyte (415) 522-3584 announced scenery/ mission disks for Falcon. VETTE, a new game, will be out in '90, offering you the chance to cruise San Fransisco in one of four custom Corvettes.

Taito (604) 984-3344 announced Arkanoid II-Revenge of Doh, Operation Wolf, Rambo III, and Qix. 4th Quarter will see the introduction of Rastan.

Capcom (415) 956-1791 offers for the ST: Last Duel, Side Arms, LED Storm, Black Tiger, Forgotten Worlds, Ghouls & Ghosts, and Strider.

Tengen (408) 435-2650 is the Atari Games home entertainment division. For the ST they will offer Blasteroids (a 3-D Asteroids), Vindicator, APB (8/'89), Xybots (10/'89) Spinnaker (617) 494-1200 announced Star Goose and Quadralien.

Data East (408) 286-7074 signed a working agreement with ABC (TV) Sports, and will release sports games for the Nintendo, its primary focus. For the ST, there is/will be: Robocop, Batman (from the movies); also Vigilante, Super Hang On, and Bad Dude.

Mindscape (312) 480-7667 proposed Gauntlet II, Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun, Harley Davidson: Road to Sturgis ('90); Afterburner (fly an F-14), Shinobi, and Balance of Power- the 1990 Edition (by Chris Crawford). ■

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BEYOND GEM!

Paying Attention to Events (Part 2)

by Douglas Hodson

Last month we covered the mouse button event handling part of the evnt_multi() function. We discussed the variables "event_types", "clicks", "button", "state", "bptr", "kptr" and "times". Seven down, sixteen more to go! This month we continue with evnt_multi() and start with a reprint of the function prototype.

```
evnt_multi(
event_types,                          /* event types */
clicks, button, state,                /* mouse button info */
m1_in_out, x1, y1, w1, h1,            /* 1st rectangle info */
m2_in_out, x2, y2, w2, h2,            /* 2nd rectangle info */
buffer,                               /* message buffer addr */
lowtime, hightime,                    /* timer info */
xptr, yptr,                           /* mouse coordinates */
bptr,                                 /* mouse button state */
kptr,                                 /* keyboard state */
key,                                  /* key code info */
times);                               /* times mouse state occurred */
```

Ten more variables can be knocked off if we now discuss the mouse rectangle monitoring events. The function that exclusively monitors these type of events is evnt_mouse(). By setting "m1_in_out" and "m2_in_out" to specified values, you can have evnt_multi() monitor the entry or exit from two different screen rectangles. The coordinates are given by "x1", "y1", "w1" and "h1" which define, respectively, the x point, y point, width and height of the rectangle. The second rectangle is specified by the "x2" set of variables.

Let's look at a quick and hopefully informative example. Have you ever wanted to make your own icons? Here's one way of handling them with mouse events. To keep things simple lets stick with "controlling" one icon. First we draw the icon on screen with a VDI function like vro_cpyfm(), the copy raster form routine. We must keep track of the coordinates of where we drew the raster. These coordinates will be input into evnt_multi(), for monitoring that rectangle on screen. If we set "m1_in_out" to zero, then an event will be triggered when the mouse pointer enters the location where the icon is displayed. If "m1_in_out" is set to one, then event is triggered when mouse leaves the rectangle of the icon.

Since most GEM programs are centered around evnt_multi(), we simply wait for the mouse to enter the icon area (or rectangle), then jump to a routine that handles icon movement and/or selection. A simple routine would wait for the mouse pointer to either leave the area and also watch to see if the user single or double clicks the mouse. If the user presses the mouse button down without releasing, then he or she wishes to "drag" the icon to a new location. Remember last month we discussed dragging by testing "bptr"! If the user double clicks then he or she wishes some action to take place.

The procedure just mentioned is one way of handling icons. This technique can be extended for two icons by using the second rectangle. More icons can be handled, but more work involved, remember GEM can only monitor two rectangles at a time. Take note, the form_do() source code mentioned several issues ago has routines for monitoring several rectangles! The code was needed to monitor all the selectable objects in a dialog box. A side note; Digital Research has considered adding a feature to GEM where a list of rectangles to monitor can be specified. Unfortunately we will probably never see this on the ST, only the PC version of GEM.

The next set of variables are related to timer events. The "lowtime" and "hightime" variables contain the low word and high word of the time interval, in milliseconds, that it takes to generate a time-out event. If you want a timer event to be generated in 1 second, you would set "lowtime" to 1000 and "hightime" to 0 (remember 1000 milliseconds is 1 second). A time-out might be used if you wanted your program to go into some demo mode if the user has been inactive for a period of time.

The three variables "xptr", "yptr" and "kptr" always return useful information regardless of which events were specified by "event_types". "xptr" and "yptr" will specify the mouse pointer coordinates when the event was triggered and "kptr" returns the keyboard state of the control, alt, and shift keys OR'd together, as follows:

0x0 all keys up
0x1 right shift key down
0x2 left shift key down
0x4 control key down
0x8 alt key down

We have hit them all except the "buffer" variable, which is a 8 word array which returns messages to the programmer. It is related to the message events generated by GEM. For a more complete discussion of this essential event to understand, I'm going to delay it's discussion until a later article. ■

THE CLUB ROOM - Doing an AtariFest

by Jerry Cross - Genesee Atari Group (GAG), Flint Michigan

*[Each month THE CLUB ROOM brings us help and ideas for Atari clubs. If your group has managed some hurdle or solved a common problem in an innovative way, share it with Z*NET!]*

I have an illness. Nothing serious, but it's really becoming a pain. The symptoms? Mention the word "Atarifest" and I get nervous, shaky, a deep burning in my wallet, and finally a bad case of the runs (run to Detroit, run to Toronto, run to Chicago...)

I guess I'm just a sucker for these shows. It's even more fun to have them in a city with a lot of other tourist attractions so I can plan a vacation around it. The recent World of Atari show in California was the most fun I ever had!

There are usually several user groups who have booths at these shows. I love to swap information on how they run their meetings, look over their libraries, and just chat about computers. A well organized Atarifest will also have a number of seminars on a variety of topics. I always learn something new!

But the main attraction of these shows are the vendors. Here is your chance to meet well known developers like David Small, Tom Harker, and Atari executives too. The last show I attended, the dealer marked down a whole table of software to 75% off the retail price! These savings alone can pay for a trip to a show.

Are you interested in hosting an Atarifest? It's not easy. Here are some tips that I have picked up from doing our own Atarifests, from being involved in the user group part of the Dearborn World Of Atari Show, and from attending several other Atari shows around the country. First, let me mention that ST-World is planning a number of shows around the country and just might be willing to host a show in your city. Give them a call first, as the World of Atari shows are outstanding AND require comparatively little work from the user group!

If you do plan to do a show yourself, start your plans many months in advance, even a full year is not too early! If you wait until the last minute, dealers will already have committments, or you may find that national events are conflicting. Divide the work- it simply will not work to have 3-4 people doing all of the work. This is exactly what destroyed the Chicago show a few years ago, and hampered others in the past. If you don't have enough dedicated volunteers at this time, don't proceed!

You will need to locate an appropriate room for your show. You should plan for, at the very least, a 6,000 square foot room. A room too small will result in isles too narrow, and a room too big will give the impression the organizers couldn't sell enough booths. Although civic centers are big and convenient for your visitors, they are expensive and harder on the vendors who must get transportation between hotel rooms and the show site. Most hotels will give your show guests generous discounts on their hotel rooms if you use their hall facilities for your show, but they are often too small.

Some very successful shows are held in schools, shopping malls, and other locations. The advantage is that they don't cost you anything, but you loose some of the "pizazz" of a big show. This is an excellent way to start out though. Get some of the other local computer clubs to join in. Another advantage is that some shopping centers will help you with publicity.

Always keep a professional approach. Remember, you are asking vendors to spend several hundred dollars in travel, lodging, and shipping expenses to attend your show, not to mention the booth rental! They won't attend unless they think you can produce many hundreds of people. Put a lot of thought into your dealer packages, and send each vendor a complete package. Take advantage of the bulk mailing permits! Sending 200 packages at bulk rate is cheaper then sending 100 by first class! Use this method to send flyers to user groups too. Don't forget to ask Atari for some help too, like handouts, bumper stickers, and maybe even a sales rep or two.

Now the hard part begins. You MUST gather all of your volunteers together and divide up the work, and set a preliminary budget. Vendor rates can range from as low as $35 a table to many hundreds for a "standard" 10' x 10' booth, depending on the facility and probable attendance. Plan your show so that most everything is paid for from the booth rentals and other promotions, and depend on the "gate" admissions for profits and unforeseen bills.

One of your big expenses will be printing: posters, tickets, flyers, programs, and dealer packages. Try to get a bid from a printer on the entire package instead of letting one printer do tickets and another doing posters. A rule of thumb that I have heard from professional show people: plan to spend a dollar in advertising for every three you expect to earn at the door. User groups may be able to do better on less advertising money if all avenues of free exposure are used well.

Try to contact those people involved in past Atari shows, and find out what problems they had, or what they did right. You can eliminate a whole bunch of headaches by catching these problems in advance. One example is in supplying electricity. Such things as not enough outlets, outlets too far away from the booths (vendors needed to get extension cords at the last minute), poor engineering that put too many booths on the same circuit resulting in blown fuses, and no telephone hookups. My first mall show had a problem too. The vendor asked me where the outlet was, so I asked the mall's electrician. He pointed up and said "up there". Yup, there it was, 45 feet straight up in the ceiling was the outlet.

Don't overlook the small details! Ever try to unload a van full of computer parts by hand and carry them across a large convention center? Arrange to supply some hand carts! What about food? Got enough tables and chairs? Find out what the local union requirements are. Some of their rules can be extremely expensive, and could even end up canceling your show. One past show had a city requirement that said you needed a paramedic on duty. Well, guess what union decided to go on strike the week of the show?

Insurance, security, tourist information, volunteers during the show, vendors requesting to borrow equipment are just a few of the problems you need to address well in advance. The list goes on and on. I took pride in my role in the Atari-Magic show as the official "Chicken Little". I would look for everything that could possibly go wrong. I'm sure some of the others on our committee didn't always appreciate me, but many of the things I brought up actually did happen, and we were ready for them! ■

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PUBLIC DOMAIN REPORT

by Alice Amore and Harold Brewer

STALKER (ST)

STALKER is a new terminal emulator accessory. The demo version was used for review. STALKER features the ability to run itself from within any GEM application. Thus, you can use any GEM program while online. If you do a lot of up/downloading, you can continue using your ST while the file transfer proceeds. Supported are ASCII, XMODEM, XMODEM-1k (YMODEM), and YMODEM-Batch protocols. Also: ANSI and VT52 escape sequences, an autodialer holding 40 numbers, an automatic cash/time-online clock, 20 user-configurable function keys, and a scroll-back buffer.

THE HIDDEN FORTRESS (ST)

FORTRESS is an arcade-style game that's enjoyable, though a little difficult. It's a conversion from the 8-bit by Electric Software's Brandon Clark. The ST version is by Ronald McDaniel. In FORTRESS, you steer your Land Rover through the catacombs of a hidden fortress while avoiding acidic slime pools, sharp spikes, and DNA-replicating walls. THE HIDDEN FORTRESS is public domain and absolutely free. The authors would appreciate your feedback.

MAILPRO (ST)

MAILPRO (version 4 series), from Hi-Tech Advisors, is a full-fledged filing and mail-merge system with versions available for the Atari ST and the IBM PC. The available demo limits the user to entering 50 items or less, but is otherwise complete. One nice thing about MAILPRO is the ability it has to assemble a data file which can then be merged with your word processing program in order to create form letters. As many as 999 "blank areas" can be exported for each letter that you compose.

PRINTIT and VIEWIT (ST)

PRINTIT and VIEWIT are two PrintMaster-related utilities written by Raymond Roux. These programs work in low, medium or high resolution. You must have at least 273,000 free memory bytes for running PRINTIT. PrintMaster graphic icons are sent to the printer in much the same way as in PM_CAT, but without title pages. But, unlike PM_CAT, VIEWIT lets the user pause between screens of icons. There are 12 icons shown per screen. A status line at the bottom of the screen shows the number of icons in the library, and allows paging up and down to previous screens and proceeding screens. Page numbers are shown to help you keep track of the library size.

CB_FINAL (ST)

ColorBurst II, version 1.2, by Peter and Andrew Beery, is the last version of this color painting program that will be offered. In low resolution, 3200 color shades are available, and in medium resolution, 800 shades. A toolbox containing icons is used to enable the drawing functions which include mirror image, vertical flip, spray color, boxes, circles, cut, fill, shrink, enlarge, and more. The style/color menu allows selection of line width, line style, fill pattern, text size, spray and stipple, and, of course, pen color, which is a treat in itself as there are so many colors to choose from. Ten screen buffers are stored in the F1-F10 keys, each with its own palette. There is no documentation file included with this program. However, there are help menus within the program accessed through the HELP key. CB_FINAL also imports D.E.G.A.S. and NEOchrome pictures. The program is GEM-based and allows you to run other programs from within it.

OMVARCDV (ST)

ARCshells make the work of ARCing and extracting files much easier, but how many of us really use all of the excellent features of the ARC utility or our favorite ARCshell? John Blakely has written OMVARCDV, a program which does nothing but view and extract ARChives. This is a joy to use if you have an abundance of ARCed files in your directories and have better things to do than type in each filename from the .TTP box, or load a huge ARCshell. Using OMVARCDV is quick and simple. Almost all functions can be handled by mouse. When extracting files, it is possible to specify *.* (all files), NNN*.* (all files with a string of characters in their filename), or *.NNN (all files with the same extension).

BobTerm

A New 8-bit Terminal Program

I've been modeming with my 65c02 Atari since 1986, and have experienced several 8-bit terminal programs: XE-Term, HomeTerm, Express!, Amodem, DeTerm, and GrafTerm--they all stick in my memory for their own reasons, be they good or bad. The heart of my terminal setup consists of Amodem 7.52, the BASIC XE cartridge and its FAST command, SpartaDOS X, and a Supra Modem 2400. I have been extremely happy with Amodem's 28K buffer, several file transfer protocols, programmable macro keys, and more. But when the author of Disk Communicator and Super ARC! released his own shareware terminal program, I couldn't wait to see what Bob Puff's BobTerm could do.

I like a large terminal program buffer. Even though BobTerm's buffer isn't as big as I am used to (17K for BobTerm and SpartaDOS X), it is sizeable enough to keep me from worrying about too-frequent hard drive access. To most 65c02 Atari modemers (or so I've heard), BobTerm's buffer is the biggest they have dealt with.

A terminal program isn't complete in my eyes unless it offers Xmodem, Xmodem CRC, and 1K Xmodem (Ymodem). I love Ymodem batch protocol, but if a program has other good points, I'll overlook the disparity. Amodem 7.52 has all these protocols available (except for Ymodem batch upload), and I have considered myself fortunate. But BobTerm simply blows Amodem's doors off with offering all the above protocols along with Ymodem batch upload, Fmodem batch (sends/receives 4-1K blocks before a checksum) and CIS Fast Xmodem.

Logging on bulletin boards with the accompanying queries for name, password, blood type, etc., can become nerve racking. With Amodem, the user has certain keys designated as macros, which can send alphanumeric data, along with ATASCII/ASCII carriage returns, pauses for a certain character or time span, and more. One-key logons at the pay services and local boards are a pleasure. BobTerm embraces this macro ability for further ease in bulletin board communication.

I could go on extolling BobTerm's virtues, like its superior edit window, large phone lists, and machine language quickness, but I'll leave that (and all I've commented upon) for another to continue in an upcoming ZMagazine issue. To give BobTerm a try, look for this shareware program on the pay services and finer bulletin boards nationwide. ■

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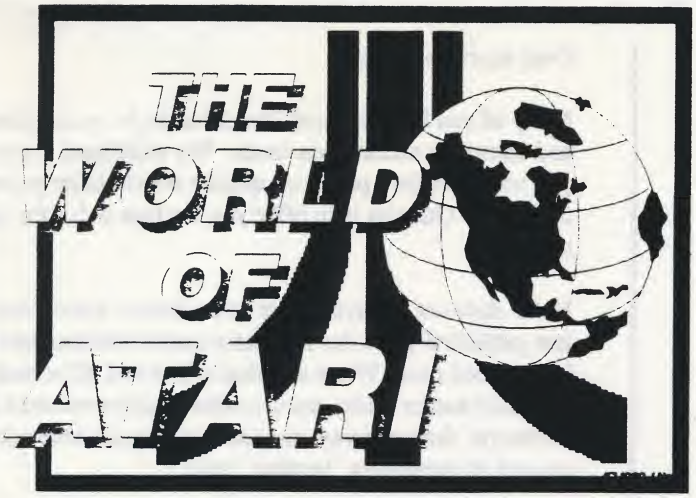

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